

## Aquatic Nuisance Species

Every day, large quantities of ballast water from all over the world are discharged into United States waters. Along with this water are plants, animals, bacteria, and pathogens. These organisms range in size from microscopic to large plants and free-swimming fish. These organisms have the potential to become aquatic nuisance species (ANS). ANS may displace native species, degrade native habitats, spread disease, and disrupt human social and economic activities that depend on water resources. Any ship carrying ballast water is a potential invasion source.

In recent years there has been increased international concern for the threats to human health, aquaculture, and coastal environments from aquatic nuisance species and diseases. The United States Coast Guard is responding to these concerns through a comprehensive national ballast water management program. This program (1) promotes ballast water management for operators of all vessels in waters of the U.S. (2) provides voluntary ballast water management guidelines for all vessels entering U.S. waters from outside of the EEZ and (3) requires the reporting of ballast water management data by all vessels entering U.S. waters from outside of the EEZ. The U.S. Coast Guard encourages program participation from vessel operators. A mandatory reporting requirement, as detailed in this brochure, was established to monitor participation with the program and assess ballast water delivery patterns. The information gathered from these reports will influence future action.

## BALLAST WATER Reporting Forms and Further Information

Reporting forms, instructions, regulations and additional educational material are available electronically through the Coast Guard Ballast Water Management Web Page:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mso/mso4/>

Or contact:

**Commandant, (G-MSO-4)**  
**2100 Second Street, SW**  
**Washington, DC 20593-0001**  
**(202) 267-0500**

## Voluntary Guidelines

(For **all** vessels with ballast tanks on all waters of the United States)

- Avoid ballast operations in or near marine sanctuaries, marine preserves, marine parks, or coral reefs.
- Avoid taking on ballast water:
  - with harmful organisms and pathogens, such as toxic algal blooms
  - near sewage outfalls.
  - near dredging operations.
  - where tidal flushing is poor or when a tidal stream is known to be more turbid.
  - in darkness when organisms may rise up in the water column.
  - in shallow water or where propellers may stir up the sediment.
- Clean ballast tanks regularly.
- Discharge minimal amounts of ballast water in coastal and internal waters.
- Rinse anchors and anchor chains during retrieval to remove organisms and sediments at their place of origin.
- Remove fouling organisms from hull, piping, and tanks on a regular basis and dispose of any removed substances in accordance with local, State and Federal regulations.
- Maintain a vessel specific ballast water management plan.
- Train vessel personnel in ballast water and sediment management and treatment procedures.

## **Ballast Water Management Practices for All Vessels That Carry Ballast Water Into The Waters Of The United States After Operating Beyond The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**

**Mandatory for vessels entering the Great Lakes and the Hudson River North of George Washington Bridge**

**Voluntary for other Waters of the United States**

- Exchange ballast water beyond the EEZ, from an area more than 200 nautical miles from any shore, and in waters more than 2,000 meters in depth;
- Retain the ballast water on board the vessel;
- Use an alternative environmentally sound method of ballast water management that has been approved in advance by the Commandant of the U.S.Coast Guard, or
- Discharge ballast water to an approved reception facility; or
- Exchange ballast water in other waters approved by the USCG Captain of the Port.

### **Safety**

If the master determines that a ballast water practice is unsafe and the vessel is on a voyage to the Great Lakes or Hudson River, the vessel must contact the appropriate Captain of the Port to approve any alternate arrangements prior to the vessel's entry. Vessels may be required to either retain the ballast water on board, exchange it at an alternate exchange site approved by the USCG Captain of the Port, or use a Coast Guard approved treatment. A vessel bound for all other waters of the United States is not required to perform a ballast water management practice which the master has determined to be unsafe.

## **Mandatory Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for all vessels entering the Waters of The United States After Operating Beyond The Exclusive Economic Zone**

The Master, Owner, Operator, Person in Charge, or vessel agent must send a signed copy of the following information to the U.S. Coast Guard. Copies of this information must be maintained on board the vessel for at least two years.

- Vessel's name, type, IMO number, flag, owner, gross tonnage, call sign, and agent
- Last port, arrival port and date, next port
- Total volume of ballast water capacity
- Total volume ballast water on board
- Total number of tanks; on board, used for ballast, to be discharged, underwent exchange, underwent alternative management
- Total number of tanks in ballast
- Is there a ballast water management plan on board? Was it implemented?
- Is there a copy of IMO guidelines on board?
- Location, date, volume, temperature of ballast when loaded for each tank.
- Description of alternative management method if used
- Reasons if no ballast treatment method used.
- Particulars of exchange if conducted including; volume exchanged; location; date; percent of tank volume exchanged, and sea height at time of exchange
- Location, date, volume, and salinity of ballast water to be discharged for each tank.

## **Where And When To Send The Required Information**

### **Vessels bound for Great Lakes:**

#### **United States or Canadian Flag vessel bound for the Great Lakes**

Fax the form to the COTP Buffalo **315-764-3283** at least 24 hours before the vessel arrives in Montreal, Quebec.

#### **Any other Flag vessel bound for the Great Lakes**

Fax the form to the COTP Buffalo **315-764-3283** at least 24 hours before the vessel arrives in Montreal, Quebec, or;

Complete the ballast water information section of the St. Lawrence Seaway required "Pre-entry Information from Foreign Flagged Vessels Form" and submit it in accordance with the applicable Seaway notice.

### **Vessel bound for the Hudson River north of the George Washington Bridge**

Fax the form to the COTP New York at **718-354-4249** before the vessel enters the waters of the United States (12 miles from the baseline).

### **Vessel bound for all ports within the waters of the United States other than the Great Lakes or Hudson River north of the George Washington Bridge**

Before the vessel departs from the first port of call in the waters of the United States send the form by one of the three following methods:

- Mail the form to the **U.S. Coast Guard, c/o Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC), P.O. Box 28, Edgewater, MD 21037-0028;**
- Transmit the form electronically to the National Ballast Information Clearinghouse (NBIC) at **[www.serc.si.edu/invasions/ballast.htm](http://www.serc.si.edu/invasions/ballast.htm);** e-mail – **[ballast@serc.si.edu](mailto:ballast@serc.si.edu);** or
- Fax the form to the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, c/o the NBIC at **301-261-4319.**

**If any information changes, send an amended form before the vessel departs the waters of the United States.**